

CAPABILITIES OF THE FIFTH ELEMENT

Marine Corps bases and stations are often called the Fifth Element of the MAGTF because of their close link to the operating forces. Marine Corps installations are the foundation of combat readiness where training, the work environment, and quality-of-life services and programs come together. Everything we do aboard our installations directly supports warfighters and the essential elements of our unique Marine culture. Our naval expeditionary character, MAGTF primacy, and our warrior ethos, are all affected by the way we organize and manage our installations.

Marine Corps installations provide a high-quality training environment and are recognized as directly supporting the “Total Force in Readiness.” Those installations serve a vital role in training the force, launching and recovering the force, and providing “reach-back” support to our deployed forces. An excellent example of this includes the capabilities within our Regional Contracting Offices that provide

MAGTF commanders various goods and services in both the garrison and deployed environment alike.

Marine Corps installations help to instill and maintain Marine Corps values, and provide a range of services to our Marines and their families. In the latter area, installations are using public/private partnerships where feasible to provide quality family housing. We are also making a significant investment to provide quality housing for our bachelors. In addition, our installations host commissaries, exchanges, medical facilities, schools, recreation and fitness centers and all other manner of community services.

Marine Corps installations are located to support maximum integration of MAGTF elements, are grouped around the MEF, and are centered on our major ground bases, training areas and maneuver lands. Additionally, we have located our installations near our airports and seaports of embarkation. Marine Corps Reserve



component activities are located throughout the country, thereby strengthening the link between the Marine Corps and American society.

The ability to train as a MAGTF is a fundamental requirement of Marine Corps readiness – and one of the primary roles of our installations. We must continue to assure unimpeded access to all ranges, airspace and training areas. We maximize training capability on our installations by emphasizing creation of training areas through systematic land-use changes proposed via long-term base master plans, land acquisition and use of real-time scheduling through enhanced information systems.

The roles of our installations are much the same as they have always been, and are commanded by Marines, but we manage our bases very differently today. The Marine Corps has invested in systems and training that support this business focus, yet still recognizes that mission accomplishment may lead us to decisions that are not focused on the bottom line. In non-core competency areas at our US

bases, the Marine Corps makes decisions to retain or divest functions based on best business practices.

In recent years our installations have assumed functions previously located in the operating forces that were not core warfighting competencies. Disbursing is a function recently modeled for that effort. The Marine Corps is considering further shifts in the areas of administration, equipment issue, supply, personal effects handling and preservation, packing and packaging. Such shifts improve our operating forces as warfighting commanders and staffs spend less time instructing, maintaining and inspecting non-warfighting functions.

To continue supporting the Marine Corps as it evolves, we have developed a document entitled *Installations 2020 (I2020)*. It provides the vision that will ensure our installations likewise evolve and transition in step with the force. This vision encourages innovation in developing and operating our installations to allow balanced application of resources to best support the combat-ready Marine.